

## **Emotional intelligence as an instrument to control occupational stress and Burnout Syndrome**

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**Keywords—** *Mental health, Physical exhaustion, Worker's health.*

**Abstract—** *Burnout Syndrome consists of a disease, also known as professional burnout syndrome, characterized by a process based on emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and low professional achievement, defined as a chronic psychological phenomenon that occurs in people whose work involves relationships of intense attention and common to people who need assistance and care. The objective was to demonstrate the importance of emotional intelligence as a means of preventing Burnout Syndrome. Methodologically, this is a bibliographical, descriptive and exploratory review of works published between 2015 and 2022, through consultations of scientific articles in the Virtual Health Library network, carried out between July and October 2022. It is possible to verify that we live in an immediatist era, which has been directly reflected in professional practice, mainly among people who occupy leadership positions, and may contribute to the compromise of the mental health of such professionals. It is essential for workers to reflect until what moment it is worth dedicating all their time to their professional life, in this sense, the need for a skill called self-management is latent, which can contribute significantly to improving the quality of life of workers. It was concluded that the main problems arising from mental exhaustion can cause irreversible harm to an individual's health, therefore, the appearance of the syndrome must be avoided from the first signs and symptoms; the most successful professionals are not necessarily those with the highest intelligence, but those with better emotional control, which means they have greater emotional intelligence. The ability of professional self-management is interpreted as breaking the alienation of work by emphasizing that overcoming the division of intellectual and manual labor is the basis for sustaining a society divided into classes and an oppressive structure.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Work has always been part of human life, which consists of an activity that can occupy a large portion of each individual's time and their interaction in society [1]. However, in the middle of the digital age, characterized by 'ultra immediacy'; such a situation, when poorly managed, can cause irreversible harm to an individual's life.

This new way of life has been directly reflected in professional practice, mainly of individuals acting in leadership roles, health professionals, teachers, police officers and, thus, this may have contributed to the impairment of the mental health of such professionals. So the question is: is it worth dedicating all the time to work?

Thus, there is a latent need for a skill called self-management, which may significantly contribute to improving the quality of life of workers; for this reason, this research initially takes an empirical and epistemological approach regarding the importance of

emotional intelligence in the prevention of Burnout syndrome.

Characterized by overwork, Burnout Syndrome (from English: "burn" which means burning and "out" outside) or Professional Exhaustion Syndrome consists of an emotional disorder with symptoms of extreme exhaustion, stress and physical exhaustion resulting from situations of exhausting work that requires a lot of competitiveness or responsibility. This syndrome is common in professionals who work daily under pressure and with constant responsibilities, such as doctors, nurses, teachers, police officers, journalists, among others [2].

The Burnout Syndrome can also happen when the professional plans or is guided by very difficult work objectives, situations in which the person may find, for some reason, not having enough skills to fulfill them [2].

If left untreated, this syndrome can result in a state of deep depression, which is why it is essential to seek help

from a specialized professional as soon as the first symptoms appear.

One of the most effective ways of preventing the appearance of the first symptoms of this Burnout Syndrome is the development of emotional intelligence (EI). According to the logic of Daniel Goleman, father of EI, psychologist and scientific journalist, understanding what governs EI is the first step in developing and practicing it, that is, in this way it will be possible to have greater control of one's emotions, facilitating building healthy relationships and conscious decision-making [3].

In this way, this research had as main objective, to present the importance of the EI, as a measure of prevention of the Burnout Syndrome; therefore, it is outlined through the following specific objectives: to present the concept of Burnout Syndrome and EI and to determine its legitimate importance in the treatment of Burnout Syndrome.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This is a bibliographic review study, descriptive and exploratory, of works published between 2015 and 2022, carried out from the previous reading of works by reference authors on the subject, through consultations with books, scientific articles in the Library network Virtual in Health, through the academic platforms SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online), LILACS (Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences) and Bireme (Regional Medicine Library), in order to have a theoretical basis and carry out the study development. The research and analysis of the material took place between July and October 2022.

Thus, this research is divided into three parts; in the first, the concept of Burnout Syndrome is made; in the second, the EI is defined and in the third, the main skills to be worked on are presented, in order to develop the EI.

As a criterion for inclusion in the sample, a search was carried out in the databases mentioned above with the descriptors in health sciences (DeCS): emotional intelligence and professional exhaustion. The inclusion criteria defined for the selection of articles were: articles published in Portuguese; complete articles and articles published and indexed in the aforementioned databases. Subsequently, a pre-analysis of all articles found was carried out, through the initial reading of the titles and abstracts, and articles that were not related to the theme were excluded. Articles published in journals were considered as analysis documents.

The database review resulted in 30 publications. Considering the eligibility criteria, 18 were excluded from the study, as they did not specifically address the subject studied. Therefore, 12 publications were analyzed in full, which suited the purpose of this review.

The presentation of the results and discussion of the data obtained was elaborated in a descriptive way, allowing the reader to evaluate the applicability of the elaborated review, in order to provide subsidies in the daily decision-making and positively impact the quality of the practice of health professionals.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Burnout Syndrome

The Burnout Syndrome, also known as “Professional Burnout Syndrome”, is characterized as a process based on the dimensions Emotional Exhaustion (EE), Depersonalization (DE) and Low Professional Achievement (BRP) [4].

Specifically among health professionals, Borrero *et al.* [5] states that Burnout Syndrome is the term used to describe the psychological response to chronic stress at work related to patient care; something that needs to be dealt with in order to ensure the worker's quality of life.

Furthermore, it is important to point out that this syndrome is highly prevalent in health and education professionals and in people who work in the finance department; making it clear that the phenomenon of stress is a current problem, being the object of multidisciplinary research in several areas, as it poses risks to the balance of human health [6]; thus, it is suggested that emotional intelligence may be one of the main prevention measures for this disease.

### Emotional Intelligence

Work is an activity that can occupy a large portion of time for each individual and their interaction in society [1]. Taking into account the current reality in an era where capitalism prevails, such an economic system can contribute to the emergence of diseases, due to the absence of the exercise of EI.

In this sense, EI can be conceived as a type of personal resource of a social and emotional nature for adaptive purposes that the individual has or develops to deal with stressful interactional demands that become present in the work environment [7].

Thus, EI is a relatively recent term, which is increasingly attracting the attention of researchers. Being studied since its inception in the work environment; in

recent years, some studies have emerged linking emotional intelligence and project management [8].

According to EI scholar Goleman [3], there are determining factors for success in relationships and work, and even physical well-being.

Know your own emotions: analyze your feelings and the actions you take in response to stimuli. When you feel down, is it a real reaction or is it masking another feeling like anxiety? This, in turn, may be responsible for covering up other, more complex feelings [3].

Behind this feeling there may be fear of failure, fear of judgment, fear of performing in front of an audience. Truly recognizing your emotions, to the point of naming them correctly, is the critical first step in developing EI. In other words, it is necessary to know emotions in order to manage them. Consequently, knowing your emotions is the key to EI. Managing emotions depends on knowing them. Once you understand your emotions, it's time to work on them [3].

The perception of emotions is an important factor in the development of human intelligence. When controlling emotions It is important to understand the difference between the two concepts: self-perception and hetero-perception [3].

Self-perception refers to what we understand and notice. Heteroperception has to do with how other people see the same situation. Often through self-perception we consider ourselves assertive in the way we act. However, others may interpret our actions as harsh. What people see is not necessarily what you think. Consequently, knowing the possible perceptions of others is also essential to work on your EI. It is through this control that the best way to send messages is mastered and thus avoid distorted understandings [3].

### Prevention of Burnout Syndrome

The Burnout Syndrome is defined as a chronic psychological phenomenon present in individuals whose work involves relationships of intense and frequent attention to people who need assistance and care, presenting three dimensions [6]; in this way, this psychic illness can cause irreversible harm to an individual's health, since stress is a current problem in the 21st century.

In the meantime, considering that the syndrome is caused by a combination of three factors, as illustrated in Fig.1: emotional exhaustion (depletion of emotional energy due to excessive work demands), depersonalization (sense of emotional distance from patients or work) and low achievement personal (feeling of low self-esteem and

low effectiveness at work) [9]; self-management needs to be encouraged in order for the individual to develop EI.

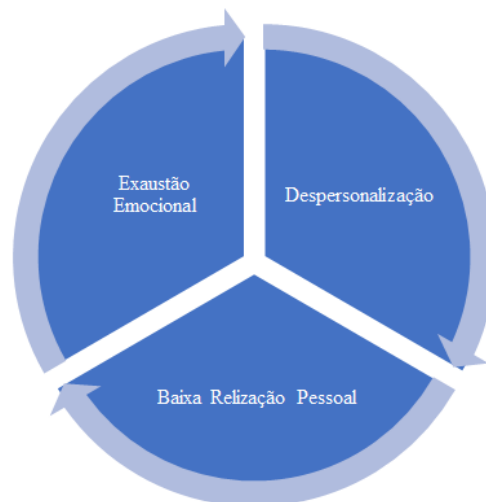


Fig.1 - Burnout Syndrome

Source: Adapted from Brito et al. [9].

In this way, self-management can consist of a practice that appears due to the best qualifications of professionals, and through it EI can be trained; since this qualification is being ordered due to the decentralization of responsibility for the performance obtained by the organization [10]; thus, this tool may represent one of the main measures to combat Burnout Syndrome.

Therefore, there is no way to talk about self-management, without mentioning balance, which consists of the word synonymous with self-management. Therefore, the values that each individual has are fundamental to the planning process. Have you ever wondered what strategies are used to separate what is a priority from what is not?

Simple question to be answered, since the values are conditioned to the concept of what is needed. You need to understand that self-management will be present throughout your life, whether in the emotional, professional or social areas, that is, in the time you undertake for yourself, for your job and for your family or friends, choosing your priority, Table 1 shows the three types of self-management below:

Table 1 - Types of Self-Management

Emotional	Emotion management
Professional	Management of time dedicated to work
Social	Time management dedicated to relationships

Source: Survey data, 2022.



### Emotional self-management

Emotional skills are directly related to the application of the individual's ability to establish relationships with himself and others, specifying purposes, emotional self-control and resilience [11]; that is, in self-control, so that he learns to manage his own emotions.

Along the same lines, Brito *et al.* [9], goes on to state that in order to achieve quality of life at work, in order to encompass aspects of well-being and biopsychosocial health, it is necessary to take prevention and treatment measures so that this state does not affect the organization in a way that prevents the productivity and development of the individual in the environment in which he is inserted.

Thus, this type of self-management ends up being directly related to the personal life of the worker, who needs to learn to take care of his mental health, which can certainly contribute to the individual being able to ensure his own quality of life, because the mental state, it is also part of the worker's health.

### Professional self-management

Barcelos and Oliveira [12] state that most successful professionals are not necessarily those with higher Intellectual Intelligence (IQ) but rather those who have better management of their emotions, that is, they have a higher level of intelligence. IE. Corroborating with previous authors, Beck, Matos and Souza [10] concludes by stating that this competence is interpreted as the rupture of the alienation of work by emphasizing that overcoming the division of intellectual and manual labor – factory bureaucracy – is the basis for sustaining society. divided into classes and oppressive structure.

### Social self-management

Beck, Matos and Souza [10] state that this competence is seen as a set of social practices that have democratic decision-making characteristics, creating the autonomy of a collective in which power is shared, reflected in a way of acting collective.

Thus, social self-management is directly related to the social responsibility of each individual, since it is necessary, taking into account everything that is directly related to decision-making, always considering the social impacts that each individual will have.

## IV. CONCLUSION

In this study, we sought to develop an empirical and epistemological approach regarding the main problems arising from mental exhaustion, which can cause irreversible harm to an individual's health; therefore, it had

as its main objective to present the importance of EI as a measure of prevention of the Burnout Syndrome.

EI is largely responsible for a person's success or failure. Because most work situations are surrounded by relationships, people with human relationship qualities such as kindness, understanding, and gentleness are more likely to succeed. Emotional self-knowledge, emotional control, self-motivation, recognition of emotions in other people and skill in interpersonal relationships are fundamental for the success of intra and interpersonal relationships. Thus combating the possibility of the emergence of professional exhaustion.

Therefore, it is expected that this investigation will be used as a theoretical basis, so that other researchers can use it in their future investigations.

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